

My friend and colleague from West Virginia, Senator MANCHIN, the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee—when we started to sit down and focus on what we were going to do with infrastructure, the necessity for a power piece was important. It was critical to what we were building. And so the committee went to work, put together, I think, a good product that moved out of the committee on a bipartisan basis, and that served as really the base for the title that is part of this measure, building on the energy act that we moved out of this body last year.

So the work that has gone into it has been a collaborative process throughout the way—very much an iterative process, as I might add, as well.

But I think we recognize that the good, solid work that has been put into this to date is just really the beginning of bringing in more of the efforts and input from our colleagues from this body from around the country.

You know, when you think about infrastructure, infrastructure connects us. Infrastructure brings us together. And so whether you are from a rural State, like mine, or from an urban State, like the occupant of the Chair, when we are able to move safely and efficiently, when we are able to communicate affordably and quickly and efficiently, when we are able to ensure that our systems are all working together, this is what makes us the strong, competitive Nation that we are.

So there is extraordinary policy in this product, but the process that has gotten us here this evening is one that, while hard and arduous, as the Senator from Arizona has noted, this is what we come here to do. We have come here to do the hard work, to do the necessary work. And tonight we are at that place where we can begin to take up the infrastructure product that we have been working on for months now and what the country is waiting for deserves.

With that, I turn to my friend and colleague from West Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

H.R. 3684

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleagues. This has been the most enjoyable venture for the last 6 to 8 weeks.

So many people have given up on the Senate. They have given up on Congress. They have given up on our ability to be able to do the big things.

This is big. This is a big deal. And I don't care who is looking at it any way they can, it has been said that nothing like this has been done in 30 years. It hasn't. We have all talked about it. We all knew it.

Senator WARNER said that, basically, potholes and bridges don't have names. They don't have Republican and Democrat identification. It will hurt us all, and it has.

It is something that every administration for the past four to five administrations knew had to be done, and they didn't because this is hard. It is not easy.

They call us a deliberative body. This is true to what deliberation is about: to come to an agreement. And it takes an awful lot of time, a lot of patience, and a lot of effort. We did that.

And when you think about it, having Majority Leader CHUCK SCHUMER and the leader of the Republican Party, MITCH MCCONNELL, vote for this piece of legislation, that says a lot about it; that it is needed. The American people are speaking loud and clear. The polls are overwhelming, whether it is Democrat, Republican, Independent—they could care less. They want their infrastructure repaired.

Let's rebuild America. We talk about it a lot. And when you think about this, this is the largest long-term jobs program that we have done—that we have ever done—for an awful long time.

They talk about, basically, that the economy is soaring now, and they figure it will taper off and maybe even go down. This will prevent that from happening. These are great jobs. In every city, in every part of the country, in every State in America, great jobs are going to be available for people who want good-paying, high-skill jobs with benefits.

This is the bill that will do it for them, and this will keep us going from 5 to 10 years, not just 1 year. It is not just a "one blip" on the radar screen and we are done. This is for 5 to 10 years, and we can continue to build on it.

There are only a few things that bring us together as Americans, that bring us together as Congress, that we all gather around. One is the military. I have never seen a military piece of legislation or NDAA that we all didn't rally around and pass, whether Democrat or Republican. We knew it had to be done for the sake of our country. And infrastructure is the second. I have never seen anything so popular as infrastructure.

People say: Oh, JOE, we need it done. And these are people that might be hardcore left or hardcore right. They could care less. They want their infrastructure. They want their roads. They want their children safe on the buses. They want to be able to travel and communicate.

They want internet service, if you live in Maine or if you live in rural Alaska or you live in rural West Virginia or New Hampshire or Virginia or Louisiana or Utah and also in Ohio. Wherever you may be, they want it. They want to be able to communicate and compete for the jobs of the 21st century.

This is largest investment in clean drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in American history—the largest. It is the largest dedicated bridge investment since the construction of the interstate highway system.

It is the largest investment in clean energy transmission and infrastructure in the history of our country. It is the largest Federal investment in passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak. Think about that. Think of what I just said. It is the largest we have ever done. This is something.

Now, I have always said that the best politics is good government. We do something good, and we can all take credit for it. I have seen people take credit for things they voted against when it was so good. This is one they can. They can say it is going to be great, go home, you will enjoy it.

I can tell you also what the deliberative body that we are and the greatest deliberative body in the world. By deliberation, it brings us together. We know each other. We know each other's families. We care about each other. We don't look at each as Democrat or Republican. These are my friends, my individual friends, who I think basically would have my back at any time of the day and I would have theirs.

This is what brings us—this is what people want. They want to see us work. And I want to thank—I will thank—Majority Leader CHUCK SCHUMER. He has been adamant about let's pass this bill. Hurry up. Now, he has pushed us a little bit faster sometimes, but it is deliberation. We got through it. But he wanted the bill to happen.

And I think, really—I think deep down—that MITCH MCCONNELL wants the bill. He has voted for it. He wants it too.

So when you have both leaders pushing for it on both sides of the aisle, this is something that is going to get across the line, and I really believe very strongly in it.

It includes the energy infrastructure act that passed the ENR, with Senator MURKOWSKI, then as the majority, as the chairman of Energy and Natural Resources. We worked on it together—a great piece of legislation.

We are talking about energy that is going to be making and keeping America energy independent, but doing it cleaner than at any time in the world, anyplace in the world. We are going to be the leader for the world. You can't eliminate your way to a clean environment, but you can innovate your way. That is what this bill has.

It has the commitment to research and development that will define basically the way that we can clean up the climate, which we are all responsible for.

So I am very proud to be part of this and proud of all of you, my colleagues, that I have worked with and I think the world of.

This is something we should be proud of. This is a give-and-take proposition. Nobody got what they wanted; everybody got what we needed. And that is the most important thing.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Now, I yield to my good friend from Louisiana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

H.R. 3684

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I join tonight in the celebration of a significant next step in the passage of a \$550 billion, over 5-year infrastructure package, with roads and bridges, highways, sewer systems, broadband, flood mitigation, and coastal resiliency.

If our responsibility as Senators is to listen to the American people, this bill is a product of hearing their voices. It is a bipartisan package, which does not increase taxes but does meet the needs that we have heard of.

Now, first, let me join others. Senators PORTMAN and SINEMA, they just did a fantastic job of leading this effort. Our colleagues, both those here who are speaking but those who are the chairs and ranking members of other committees have really guided us tremendously and produced a great work.

I would also like to acknowledge our House colleagues: BRIAN FITZPATRICK, JOSH GOTTHEIMER, the Problem Solvers Caucus, who on their side of the Chamber have also seen fit to already endorse our effort. And when they did, it was certainly a strong wind of encouragement for us.

But most of all, I thank the American people. The Constitution gives Congress the responsibility for infrastructure. Our duty gives us the responsibility to listen. If you listen to the American people right now, they are concerned about jobs, the economy, safety, and quality of life.

With this bill, we give voice to their concerns. For example, as regards safety, there is \$110 billion for better highways, bridges, and roads. Along the way, by the way, you create quite a number of jobs.

My State—every State—has been affected by flooding. There is \$3.5 billion for flood mitigation; \$500 million to make storm drains bigger, so that if there is a tremendous rain event, systems are better able to hand this.

There is money for sewer systems, money for broadband. Many places in my State do not have high-speed internet. This addresses it in my State and every other.

Quality of life. There are people in my State who, on a Sunday morning, you could drive in 15 minutes to where they are going to work, and on a workday, it takes them an hour and a half. That is 3 hours a day that they are away from their family, 3 hours a day that they are not doing something productive, 3 hours a day of their life which is wasted—times the number of days they work in a year. This will improve their quality of life.

And, by the way, did I mention that it will create a lot of jobs along the way?

So whether it is to benefit the economy, to create better paying jobs, to make people safer, to improve the quality of life, I feel as if we have done it.

Will Rogers said that elected officials are nothing but the hired help. I agree with that. We were sent here to do a

job. This legislation shows that Congress can still work, can still do its job for the American people.

With that, I yield to my colleague from Utah.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

H.R. 3684

Mr. ROMNEY. Mr. President it is an honor to be here. They say that making law is like making sausage. But I have seen sausage made, and it is a prettier process, and it is a lot easier. But this has been a lot more rewarding. I have enjoyed the time we have had together.

My good friend from West Virginia talked about how much money we are spending here, how big this is. But let me note something, underscore something: This is paid for. This is not going to raise taxes on people. This is, instead, taking some money that was already appropriated, not used for COVID relief. We are going to bring that back and use it to help build infrastructure.

This is a bill which is paid for, and it gives the American people something that they desperately need, and that is an upgrade in our infrastructure.

Now, of course, you know it was several months ago that this group came together. We call ourselves affectionately the G-10. Senator PORTMAN and Senator SINEMA have shown enormous patience and persistence and resolve getting this across the finish line. I want to thank also particularly Senator CAPITO for laying out the foundation for what we proposed at the very beginning, which we built upon and has led to the final piece of legislation.

As has been said, neither side got everything we wanted. There are a bunch of things in this bill I don't like, I would take out. There are things in this bill I know my Democratic friends don't like and would take out. But the nature of getting work done in Washington is to be able to come up with something that has enough good for both that we actually get it done. And the American people have been waiting one President after another after another, saying let's improve our infrastructure, and it just doesn't get done. This time, we have.

Now, I know that Republicans had a choice here. We could let the Democrats just do something on their own. With reconciliation, they could have spent trillions of dollars without any of our help. But the President and the leaders of the Democratic Party here and our friends said: No, let's work together and see if we can do something collectively.

Now, I know Members of both parties have mischaracterized our efforts as somehow linked to paving the way to the Democrats' \$3.5 trillion wish list. If you don't think our Democratic friends are going to push for that monstrosity with or without this bill, then I have a bridge in Brooklyn to sell you. They

are going to push for that anyway. This is a separate piece of legislation. I love this one. I hate that one. These are two very different things, and there is going to be an effort, obviously, to stop that bill from going forward.

This is not perfect. It is paid for.

I want to note as well that if the Democrats would have written the bill entirely on their own, Utah would probably have ended up on the short end of the stick. But because of our involvement in this effort, some of our rural States like mine have been able to have a seat at the table, and that means limiting the spending on bad policy that only benefits the rich coastal cities in the East and the far West. So I am proud of this bill because it benefits Americans across the country.

For decades, elected officials have talked about addressing our Nation's infrastructure. This infrastructure bill turns that talk into reality without raising taxes on hard-working Americans or adding to our debt.

I am proud of my colleagues. It has been fun working with them. It was challenging from time to time, I am sure, to have to listen to me, they would tell you, but I am proud of what we did together, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Now, I would respectfully request that we yield just a minute more to Senator PORTMAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

H.R. 3684

Mr. PORTMAN. I thank my colleague from Utah for his wise words. Yes, it is true that there was a \$2.65 trillion package proposed by President Biden for infrastructure, and we are at \$550 billion. So it is bipartisan. Both sides made concessions. But it is very different than what we would have seen, and again, it is an alternative with no taxes.

I do want to say that there was another effort underway before we got started. Actually, SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO was part of our efforts early on and then decided to try to work with the White House to come up with a proposal. They were not successful in the end of bridging the gap between where the White House was and where they were, and the bipartisan approach that we used here ended up being more successful, but we are building on the foundation that they created. So you will see Senator CAPITO managing this bill for our side. I appreciate her support the other day on our first vote, and I appreciate the hard work they put in to help us to be able to come to this point today.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

H.R. 3684

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, well, I thank my colleagues for their fine speeches, and I very much appreciate them.

Now, the bipartisan group of Senators has finished writing the text of